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Announcements

**Our office will be closed on
Monday, April 9, 2012**



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THE SHEPARD LANTERN

Powerful, Painted, Pink Flamingo?

By Amanda Sanders, Marketing and Public Relations

Together these three words seem silly, but this fall the Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center has been fortunate to be a part of three separate events; Paint the Town Pink, Pink Power and Darleen's Flamingo 5K - all which raise either awareness, funds or both for cancer in our region.



The 3rd annual Paint the Town Pink event was held on Friday, October 14th. The staff at Eastern Radiologists in Washington coordinated the event and fundraising activities. They sold Paint the Town Pink t-shirts and cookbooks and covered the costs of these items, therefore 100% of the funds raised were donated to the Center. Local businesses contributed by offering a discount to anyone wearing pink! Beaufort Hospital and cancer center employees are shown supporting the event by wearing jeans and the Paint the Town Pink shirts to work. Tanya Dixon stands with John Tate and Dr. Crews as she presents a check to the Shepard Cancer Foundation for over \$12,000.00!

Continued on page 5

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Waiting Times and Chemotherapy Treatments: *A Process of Double Checks and Teamwork*

by Art Hedges, RPH - Your Cancer Center Pharmacist & Cancer Survivor



Patients sometimes wonder why their appointments take so long to complete. Although there is no one answer to this question, there are most always valid reasons for any delay. Sometimes it may just be due to the day and time of your appointment and the associated activity at the cancer center at that time.

Sometimes, before your treatment can begin, laboratory tests are needed to ensure that you can be safely treated on that day. These lab tests often take time to complete, and then must be reviewed by your provider. On some

treatment days, an exam by your provider may be indicated before your treatment; and the results of this exam might alter your treatment plan for the day.

Once lab tests and exams are completed and the decision to proceed with your treatment is made, the treatment orders are forwarded to the staff in the infusion suite (chemo bay) where they are double checked and verified by the chemotherapy nurse.

At this point, if all is well, your treatment orders are forwarded to your pharmacist. Chemotherapy orders are then reviewed, any changes are noted, and the orders are again verified. This process is necessary to ensure that the right medication, at the right dose, for the right patient and disease state, given by the correct route (IM, IV, subcutaneously, or oral) are all appropriate and as ordered by your provider.

Once verified, your treatment orders are entered into the pharmacy computer system and are checked against any noted allergies, drug interactions, or incompatibilities. Medication labels are then generated and double-checked against your treatment orders for accuracy and completeness.

Your chemotherapy medications are prepared only after completion of all these steps and double checks. For some medications, preparation may only involve the dispensing of a prepackaged, single-dose, ready-to-administer medication. For others, it may involve the

mixing and preparation of your chemotherapy medication by your pharmacist. Once your chemotherapy has been prepared, it is labeled and your pharmacist does a final check before it is dispensed to your treatment nurse.

Once received by your nurse, it is double-checked again against your treatment orders for accuracy and completeness. So before you actually receive your treatment, it has been reviewed and verified a number of times by at least two staff members.

Finally, your chemotherapy is administered to you. Your treatment may require only a few minutes or may take a few hours to complete. All the while, your nurse is closely monitoring you.

After your treatment is finished, your pharmacist completes billing procedures for your administered treatment and your orders are profiled for future reference.

So the reasons for your waiting time may be as simple as the day and time of your appointment. Or, the delay you experience may be due to the process of assuring your readiness for treatment. Whatever the cause, we strive to keep your waiting times at a minimum, consistent with your own medical needs, and the needs of others being treated at the cancer center on the same day. Staff can do some advanced preparation for your visit to minimize waiting times, but since your treatment plan is as individual as you are, some preparations cannot be undertaken until you arrive for your appointment.

Things don't always work out the way you and we would like, but we would like to thank you for your understanding and patience when the wait seems longer than expected.

One Talented "Bartender"!

Many patients receiving treatment in the Shepard Cancer Center Chemo Bay affectionately refer to our pharmacist, Art Hedges, as their own special "bartender" because he mixes the potions that deliver treatment and relief. Throughout the day, Art is secluded in the pharmacy, working diligently to be sure that patients re-

ceive the specific treatment ordered for them. Patients may not see Art as he quietly works in the pharmacy, and they may not be aware of the essential role he plays in their treatment. But Art's role is vital to each and every patient who comes into the chemo bay, and we want you to catch a glimpse of who Art is when he's not "bartending" at the cancer center.

Art was educated at Creighton University and at the University of Iowa, and completed a hospital pharmacy residency at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics. He moved to Washington, NC, from Michigan and joined Beaufort County Hospital in 1989 as a staff pharmacist.

Art has been involved with the oncology department since 2001, and moved to the new Shepard Cancer



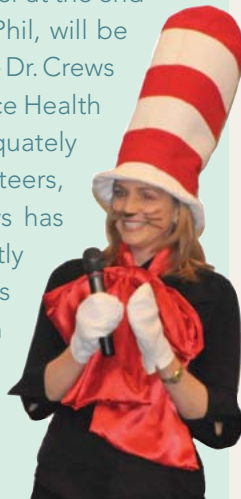
Center when it opened in 2006. He enjoys working with the cancer center staff, volunteers, and patients, and being involved with patient care. Art says he feels privileged not only to assist with patients' care but also to know some of them (and their family members) on a personal basis. He tells us he has developed a deep appreciation for what our patients and families deal with as they cope with their illness.

Art and his wife Cecilia have enjoyed living in Bath since 1995 and, as a blended family, have 4 adult children.

Please join us in thanking Art for the efficient and professional way he serves us all!

Best Wishes Dr. Crews!

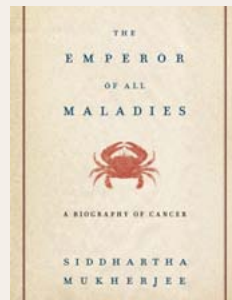
It is with great sadness we announce that Dr. Jennie Crews will leave the Shepard Cancer Center at the end of January 2012. She and her husband, Phil, will be moving to Bellingham, Washington, where Dr. Crews will be the Cancer Center Director of Peace Health St. Joseph Hospital. Words cannot adequately express the gratitude of staff, volunteers, patients, and caregivers for all Dr. Crews has given over the years! She will be greatly missed, but we sincerely wish Dr. Crews and Phil much success and happiness in this new phase of their lives.



A Good Read

Book Review by John Inzerillo, MD

"The Emperor of All Maladies" by Siddhartha Mukherjee



The subtitle of this book, The Emperor of All Maladies, clarifies the main title, as it is "A Biography of Cancer," written by medical oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee. The author himself refers to his book as a history of cancer.

While reading this book I found myself standing side by side with one of the main hero's of the book, Dr. Sidney Farber.

Dr. Farber is the father of modern chemotherapy. He was the first to dream of a universal cure for cancer. When other physicians could only throw their hands up in defeat in treating childhood acute lymphocytic leukemia, Dr. Farber, a pathologist, was able to find a useful treatment in a vitamin-like medication. He went on to develop other useful chemotherapeutic drugs, many of which are talked about in the book.

Cancer has also been referred to as "the king of all terrors." In the late 1940's and early 1950's there was a need to get doctors to spend more time on cancer research. This took a great deal of money and a keener awareness of the suffering with which affected individuals fought. It was Mary Lasker, a New York socialite, who first sought a way to publicize, then run a crusade against cancer. She and her followers changed the methods and means of the American Cancer Society and thus almost single handedly started the war on cancer.

The author successfully brings years of cancer research, millennia of cancerous diseases, and many lifetimes of personal, political, and societal struggles, which melded together to bring us to this time in history. This is a time when almost 60% of all cancers can be controlled or cured. Today, because of the work and dreams of those described in this book, there are almost 12 million cancer survivors. They fought the battle of their lives and won.

A Patient's Perspective: *Turning Points*

By Debra ("D.J.") Midgett

We all have turning points throughout our lives that mold and shape who we are. Sometimes a turning point is falling in love and getting married. It could be having children or choosing a career. Sadly, a turning point could be when we lose a loved one. Each of us has unique experiences within those turning points that affect us for the rest of our lives.



Being given a cancer diagnosis often becomes a turning point in our lives. Sometimes it feels like a mad roller coaster ride. While I'm waiting for a scan report or to see the doctor for a check-up, it's like riding in the small open car on the track as it slowly clicks and clacks while climbing the steep hill. Sometimes I don't know if I should close my eyes and shut out everything or open them wide, along with my mouth, and just scream as loud as I can. Then there are times when things are going well and the reports are showing improvement, and I feel like riding down the roller coaster

with my hands held high in jubilation. I long for a long steady even track without bumps, bends, hills, or valleys. However, that is not the journey of cancer, nor the journey of life for that matter. And like life, my journey has allowed me to meet some amazing people and to experience tremendous support along the way.

I then experienced three years of remission that were followed by four reoccurrences and surgeries. Along the way, I've also been diagnosed with breast cancer, discovered I had a BRCA1 gene mutation, and finally a diagnosis of chronic myeloid leukemia in 2010. So, here I am a member of what I call the Triple C (cancer) club. All in all, I've had six surgeries, 81 chemo treatments, and 36 radiation treatments. But, who's counting? Obviously I am!

I am often asked how I've been able to cope on this journey. I believe that my faith has been the largest factor in coping. And of course, my family, friends, and church have been a strong foundation of support. I couldn't have made it this far without all of the knowledgeable doctors, nurses, and staff at both the Carolinas Medical



Center in Charlotte and our gem of a cancer center here in Washington. The support programs here are amazing. I've taken advantage of the yoga classes, the soothing massages, the Look Good Feel Better program, the Healthy Living with Cancer seminars, the Lunch and Learn series, and most of all, the Healing Words journaling seminar.

Talking and writing about my cancer and just about life in general helps me survive. My husband, Ray, teases me that even the grocery store clerk knows I'm a cancer survivor! The best way for me to tell you what the Healing Words seminar has meant to me is to share something that I've written about the program. I hope that you'll consider journaling as a means of coping with cancer. It has certainly helped me to understand the turning points of my journey.

"The Common Thread"

As I sit at the table in journaling class, I am in awe of the brave strong women that surround me. We have all come to this class with varying life experiences; yet

My long journey with cancer began over ten years ago on the day after 9-11-2001. I was scheduled for a hysterectomy that day and, like the rest of the world, I was so consumed with the events of the previous day that my little routine surgery seemed so insignificant. I woke up eight hours later as a Stage IIIc survivor of fallopian tube cancer, a rare and unusual cancer. Most of that week was a complete blur and I am often grateful that I was spared some of the sorrow and sadness that marched across the television screen 24/7.

have bonded together in a short amount of time. The class and our leader make it so easy to JUST write. Our writing doesn't have to be correct, complete, or even on subject. We can share what we've written or NOT. I have found that I really look forward to hearing their life stories, their thoughts, their hopes, and their dreams. It somehow makes mine seem more "normal". When it

feels that sometimes my tapestry is unraveling, it gives me a common thread for holding on to dear life. This common thread between us, that as cancer survivors, binds us together so that we have the courage and strength to pick up the loose ends and begin to reweave our lives into a new pattern. Our common thread, at this point, becomes precious and golden.

Powerful, Painted, Pink Flamingo, continued from page one

Over 30 women from the Beaufort community hopped on the Pink Power Express headed for the Rock Spring Center on Wednesday, October 19th for the Pink Power event. We arrived in style with eccentric boas of all shapes and colors. There, we were greeted with goody

bags and hospitality. Over 200 women enjoyed specially prepared Pink Power foods and heard prevention and early detection information. Pink Power was part of a regional breast cancer awareness tour featuring a national speaker who is a three-time breast cancer survivor. Becky Olson was motivating and frankly hilarious. This event was hosted by University Health Systems.



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Runners, and walkers, athletes and families alike took their mark for the pinkest, long-legged race of the year! The Darleen's Flamingo 5K (organized by the Smith family) held its 2nd annual "Make Your Own Party" road race on November 5th to bring the community together in the fight against cancer. The money, a com-

After the race, all the runners and their families were treated to a big breakfast of eggs, pancakes, bacon, sausage, biscuits, coffee and fruit! It was a cold day but you couldn't help feel the warmth of hearts from the organizers.

Darleen's Flamingo 5K is organized in memory of Darleen Smith, who lost her life in 2010 after a hard battle against breast cancer. She lived by her favorite slogan, *make your own party*. Look for this event to happen at the same time every year; the first Saturday in November.



WHY CONSIDER a Port-A-Cath

Nicole DaVia, PA-C



Are you someone who likes to be poked or prodded with needles?

If you are then you are among the minority. There are devices available that can lessen this burden on you as a patient receiving chemotherapy. When your oncologist says you need chemotherapy treatment, the main route through which it will be given is a blood vessel (vein) in your arm. Some people have good veins and others do not. Some chemotherapy can be given by vein, but many cannot. In order to alleviate the stress of starting an IV, and to prevent any problems associated with giving chemo in a vein, central venous access devices were developed.

So what is a central venous access device? It is called a port-a-cath and is a device that is inserted under the skin in the upper chest to allow direct access to the bloodstream. It is surgically implanted as an outpatient procedure under local and conscious sedation. After surgery you may be a little sore, but once it has been placed it can be used right away. It will look like a little bump under your skin and is not all that noticeable. The port consists of a reservoir with a silicone bubble where a needle is inserted. A plastic tube is attached and threaded into the superior vena cava, one of the big veins that go to the heart. This allows for medicine to be infused and spread throughout the body more quickly and efficiently. When you come for your chemotherapy, the port is accessed using a needle, and all of your IV medicine is given through the port. When your treatment is done, the needle is removed. Some patients require numbing cream they can apply about half an hour before their appointment to lessen the pain from the needle stick.

The port does not require much care and there is no maintenance on your end! It should be flushed with heparin after every use, and every two months if it is not being used, to prevent clotting. You can take a shower, swim, exercise, lift...there are no restrictions!

Two different types of ports are available now, and the newest one is called a Powerport. When you go for scans that require IV medicine, the medicine can be given through the Powerport. Older ports do not have this capability and so require a peripheral IV be placed in your arm. You should check with the surgeon who placed your port if you have any questions about which type you have. It is important to remember that, if you are hospitalized, your port can be accessed by trained medical staff rather than having an IV placed in your arm.

Port-a-caths are very beneficial but can be associated with some complications.

One complication during the placement of the port is a pneumothorax around the lung due to a lung puncture. The incidence of this is very low at 1%. Some patients may develop an infection in the port. If this occurs, the port usually needs to be removed and the infection treated. Once the infection is cleared, a new port can be placed if needed. Sometimes a blood clot may form inside the catheter that may block the ability to put medicine into or draw blood out of the port. Preventing this from occurring is the key, so it is important to get the port flushed every two months when not in use. If we are using the port to deliver medicine and the medicine does not go in, if it is flipped around or some part of the port has become unattached, the port would have to be replaced.

Why might you want to consider a port-a-cath? There are several good reasons. First, nobody enjoys getting stuck with a needle, especially an IV. Some people have bad veins and require multiple needle sticks before an IV can be successfully placed, causing unwanted and unnecessary stress and pain. Some chemotherapy agents can cause severe burns to the skin if they leak outside of the vein, and some can cause pain and aching while being infused. Chemotherapy can sometimes take several hours to a whole day to give, and some patients need to wear an infusion pump that delivers chemotherapy over

a number of days. A port makes these longer deliveries more convenient.

One question we frequently get is 'now that I am done with treatment, how long do I need to keep the port?'. We usually advise patients to keep their ports for a total of two years when not being used. Some wonder why our clinic does not routinely draw blood from the port. The main reason is the more frequently you access the port, the higher the potential for causing an infection.

Having a Port-a-Cath is not a necessity, and some patients can do without them, but for the majority of patients it makes a big difference, both mentally and physically.

Community Spotlight

The staff and volunteers of the Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center, and the board members of the Shepard Cancer Foundation, would like to recognize in each edition of the Shepard Lantern one of the many members of our community who contribute in so many ways to our patients, survivors, caregivers, and staff.

This edition recognizes the contributions of

Pamlico River Quilters Guild

If you or a loved one has been a patient in our chemo bay, it's likely that you've been offered a warm, beautiful lap quilt which was created with love by the talented ladies of the Pamlico River Quilters Guild. Each year, these ladies make dozens of quilts of various sizes, patterns, and colors and donate them in the Fall to the Cancer Center to be given to our patients. Many thanks to these ladies for their hard work and generosity!

FREE Programs for cancer survivors and caregivers

Look Good...Feel Better

brought to you by the American Cancer Society

Held on the 2nd Monday of every month at 2:00pm

A hands-on group session for adult female cancer survivors currently in treatment who are coping with the side effects of chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment.

Therapeutic Massage

One free therapeutic foot, hand or chair massage is available every week to all cancer survivors and primary caregivers.

Restorative Yoga and Meditation

A yoga class that emphasizes relaxation for the body, mind and spirit. Registration is not required. Held every Monday at 6:00pm at Lifestyles Medical Fitness Center. Classes are open to all cancer patients, survivors, and primary caregivers.

For more information, to make an appointment or to register, please call 975-4308.



"Soulful Art" is Back!

Our 2nd annual "Soulful Art" project is complete and on display in the lobby of the cancer center. Note cards replicating the canvas are on sale at the center as well.

Local talented artist, Carol Mann, began our work of art by sketching an outline on a canvas. Survivors, caregivers, volunteers, and staff did a beautiful job of adding their personal strokes to the canvas. When the canvas was full of color, Carol Mann finalized it with her special touches. The completed masterpiece will be on display in the cancer center until our annual "Shaggin' For a Cause" on March 17, 2012, where it will be sold at auction. Thanks to all participants and to our Art Cart volunteers who made this such a successful project!

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Winter 2012

The Shepard Lantern

Cancer Center News

“We live for today, everyday”

-Cancer Survivor

